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News Release

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Houston VA Selected to Host 2007 Golden Age Games

HOUSTON – The Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center (MEDVAMC) has been selected to host the Department of Veterans Affairs' National Golden Age Games next year, August 21 – September 1, 2007. These games bring together veterans age 55 and older who receive health care at VA medical facilities across the country to compete in events such as swimming, bicycling, golf, shot put, discus, 10-meter air rifle, table tennis, dominoes, shuffleboard, horseshoes, nine-ball, bowling, checkers, and croquet.

Sports and fitness are vital ingredients of VA's four National Rehabilitation Special Events. The other events are the National Wheelchair Games, the Winter Sports Clinic, and the Creative Arts Festival. Each one showcases different sporting events and activities allowing veterans to demonstrate their skills, competitiveness, and spirit.

The Golden Age Games is an outgrowth of VA's historic involvement in geriatric programs. Many of the events began as recreational activities at VA hospitals and nursing home care units across the country. In 1985, the first Golden Age Games took place in Albany, Georgia, with 115 competitors. This year's event will take place May 7 - 12, 2006 in Hampton, Virginia.

VA research and clinical experience verify that physical activity is particularly important to the health, recovery, and well-being of older people. All of the National Rehabilitation Special Events provide disabled and elderly veterans with challenging opportunities to accomplish feats many may have believed were no longer available to them because of their disabilities or their age.

To support the more than 500 athletes expected to compete in this week-long event, hundreds of volunteers are needed to assist with everything from setting up venues to hosting evening entertainment. For information about volunteering, call MEDVAMC Employee Wellness Coordinator Mike Mitchell at (713) 794-8779. For more information about the Golden Age Games, visit <http://www1.va.gov/vetevent/gag/2007/default.cfm>.

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For additional Games and/or national media information, please contact Dewayne Vaughan, National Director for the NVGAG at (202) 745-8615 or at dewayne.vaughan@va.gov OR Jenny Tankersley Ballou, National Special Events Public Affairs Coordinator at (757) 728-3450 or at jenny.tankersley@va.gov